DAN WATTERS ANDREI BRESSAN ADRIANO LUCAS

DESTRO

image

#01

ENERGON UNIVERSE

CONFIDENTIAL

ALIAS DESTRO

ADDITIONAL FIELD OPERATIVES

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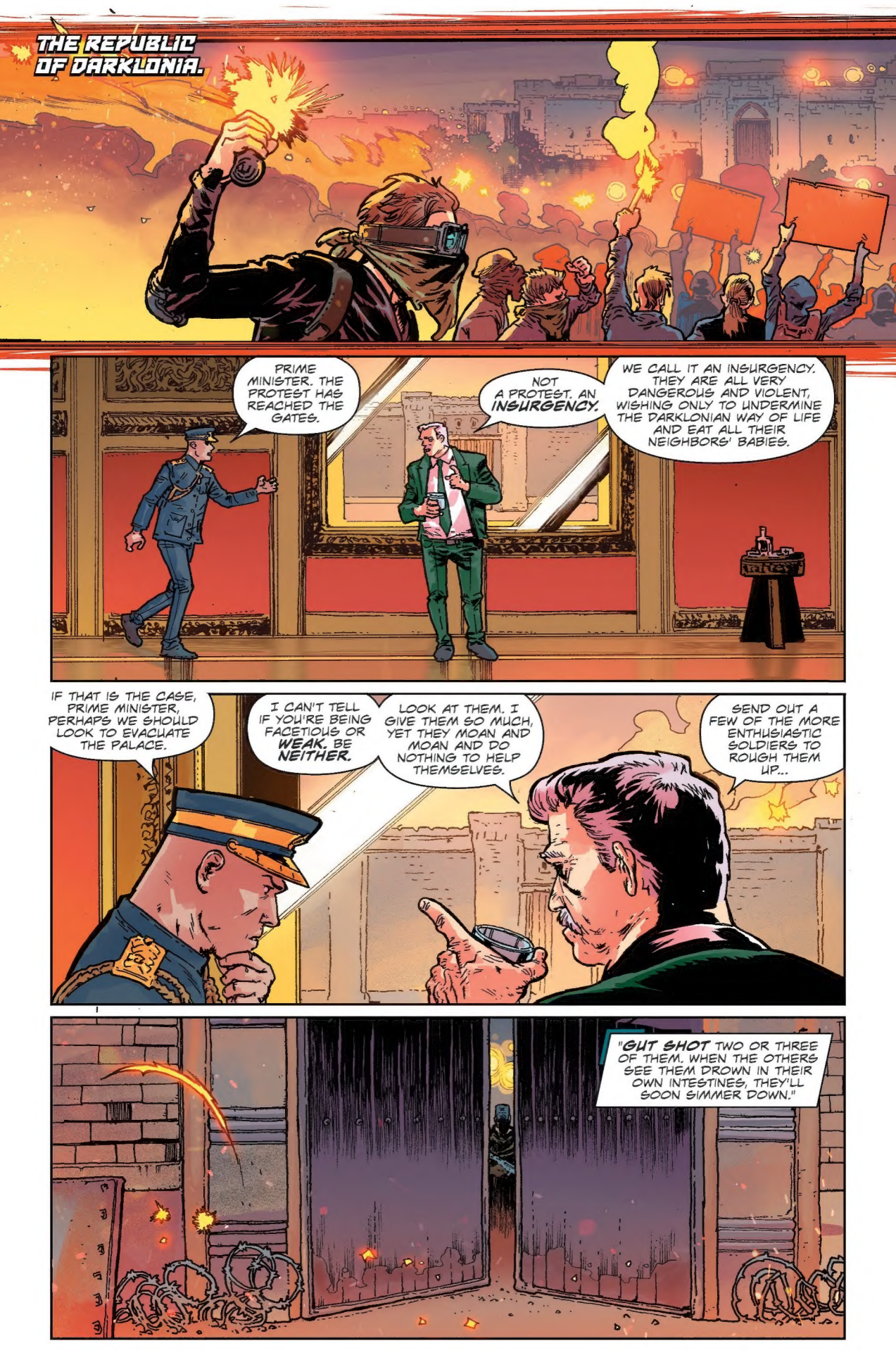
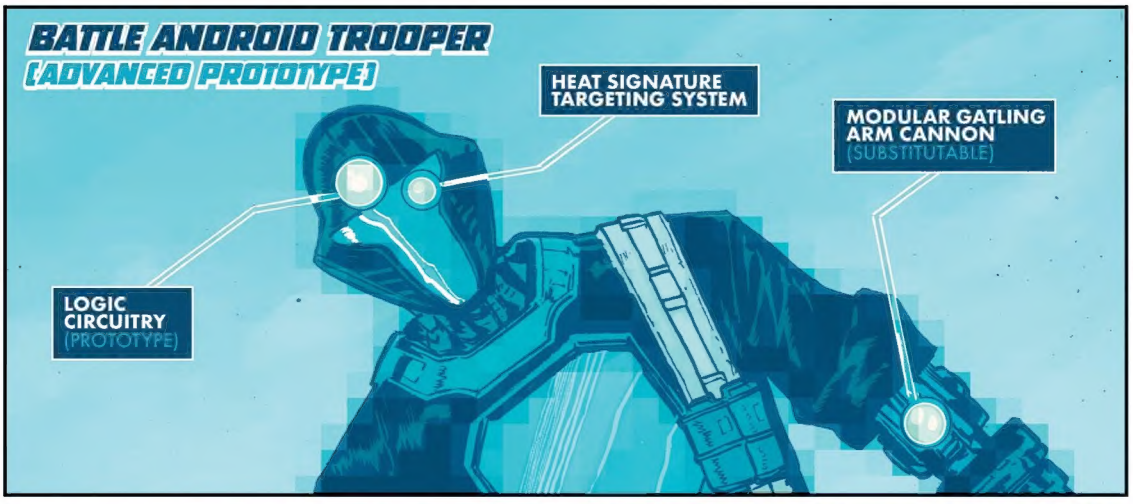
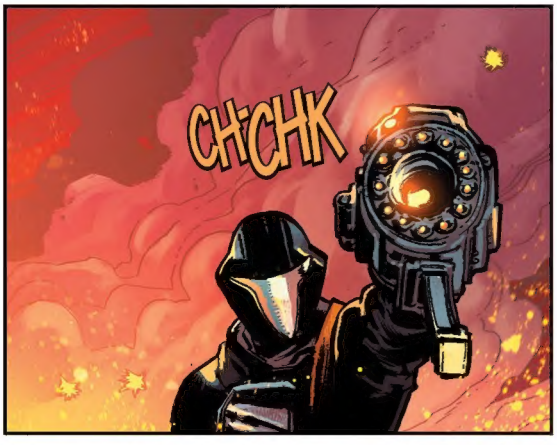
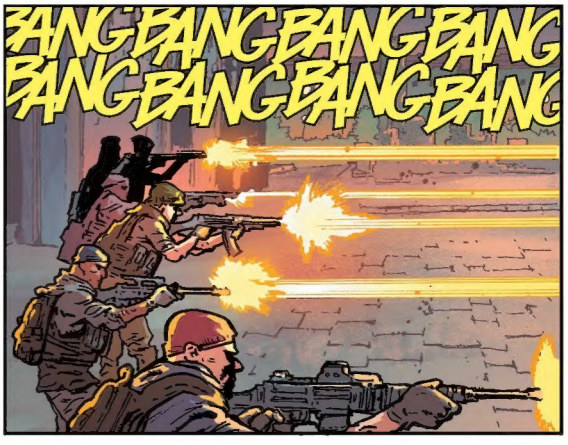

THE REPUBLIC OF DARKLONIA.
PRIME MINISTER. THE PROTEST HAS REACHED THE GATES.
NOT A PROTEST. AN INSURGENCY.
WE CALL IT AN INSURGENCY. THEY ARE ALL VERY DANGEROUS AND VIOLENT, WISHING ONLY TO UNDERMINE THE DARKLONIAN WAY OF LIFE AND EAT ALL THEIR NEIGHBORS' BABIES.
IF THAT IS THE CASE, PRIME MINISTER, PERHAPS WE SHOULD LOOK TO EVACUATE THE PALACE.
I CAN'T TELL IF YOU'RE BEING FACETIOUS OR WEAK. BE NEITHER.
LOOK AT THEM. I GIVE THEM SO MUCH, YET THEY MOAN AND MOAN AND DO NOTHING TO HELP THEMSELVES.
SEND OUT A FEW OF THE MORE ENTHUSIASTIC SOLDIERS TO ROUGH THEM UP...
"GUT SHOT TWO OR THREE OF THEM. WHEN THE OTHERS SEE THEM DROWN IN THEIR OWN INTESTINES, THEY'LL SOON SIMMER DOWN."

THE REVOLUTION IS CANCELLED, I'M AFRAID, BOYS AND GIRLS--ON ACCOUNT OF YOUR VASTLY INFERIOR FIREPOWER.
UH, WHO THE HELL IS THAT?


BATTLE ANDROID TROOPER
(ADVANCED PROTOTYPE)
HEAT SIGNATURE TARGETING SYSTEM
MODULAR GATLING ARM CANNON
(SUBSTITUTABLE)
LOGIC CIRCUITRY
(PROTOTYPE)


CH-CHK


BANG BANG BANG BANG
BANG BANG BANG BANG

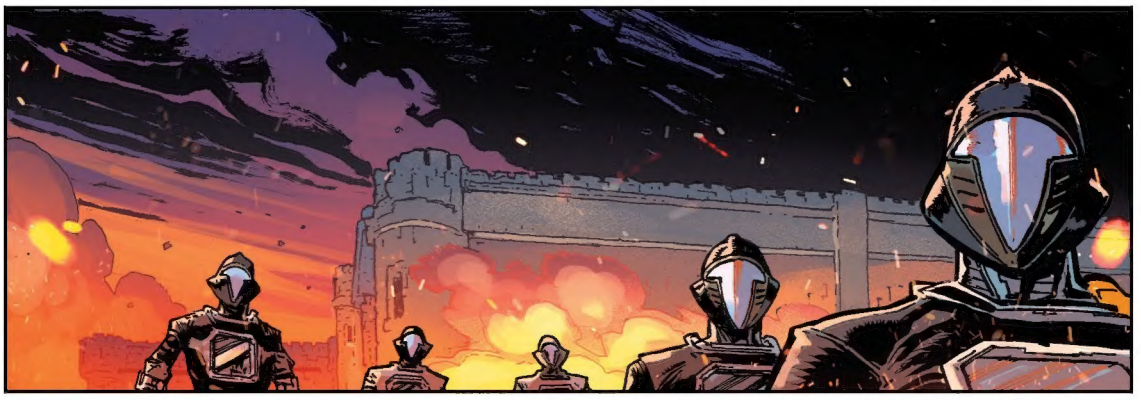
TSH
TSH
TSH
TSH
TSH
TSH

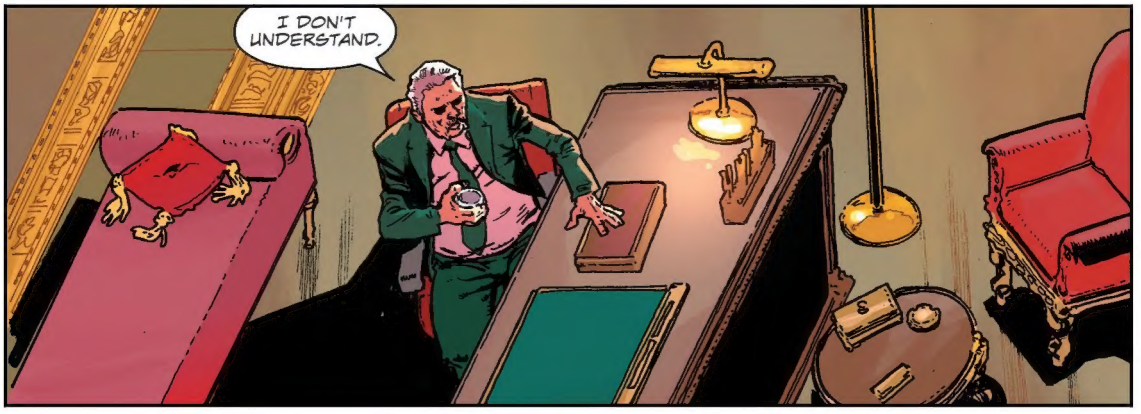
HOW IS IT STILL STANDING?
WHERE DID IT COME FROM?
OH, GOD! UP THERE...

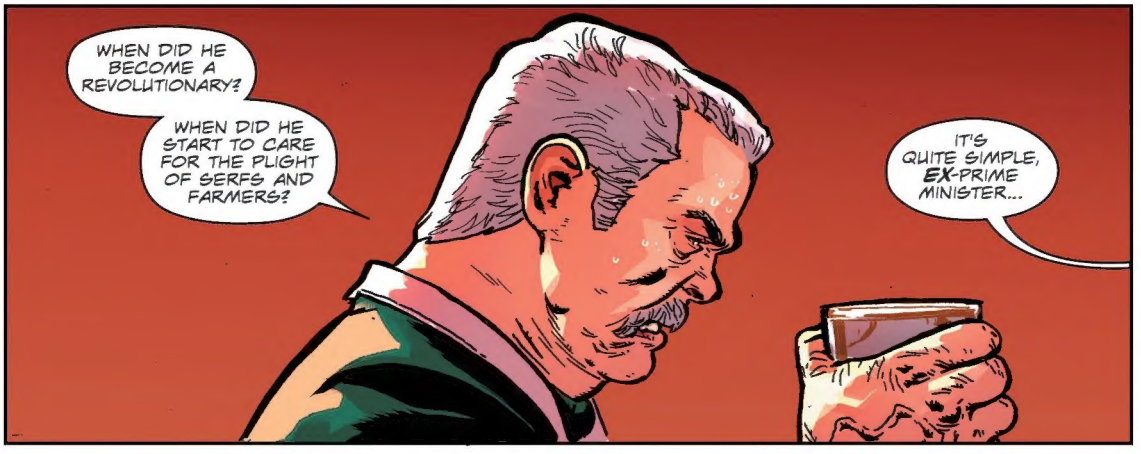
"...THERE ARE MORE INCOMING!"

I TOLD THEM TO SHOOT TWO OR THREE.
BOYS WILL BE BOYS, I SUPPOSE.
FALL BACK! BACK TO THE PALACE!
THEY AREN'T HUMAN! THEY'RE MACHINES!
WHAT...? IT CAN'T BE HIM. GET ME OUT OF HERE!
IT'S TOO LATE.
THEY HAVE BREACHED IT! THE PALACE IS BEING LIBERATED!
SUPPORT THE EMANCIPATORS!
TEAR DOWN THE THRONE OF POWER!
IT... IT IS HIM. GET ME A DIRECT LINE.

DARKLONIA IS FREE!
PEACE
BANG BANG BANG BANG BANG BANG BANG
WE DESERVE PEACE
LAIRD DESTRO.
THE DARKLONIAN PEOPLE ACCEPT YOUR RESIGNATION, PRIME MINISTER.



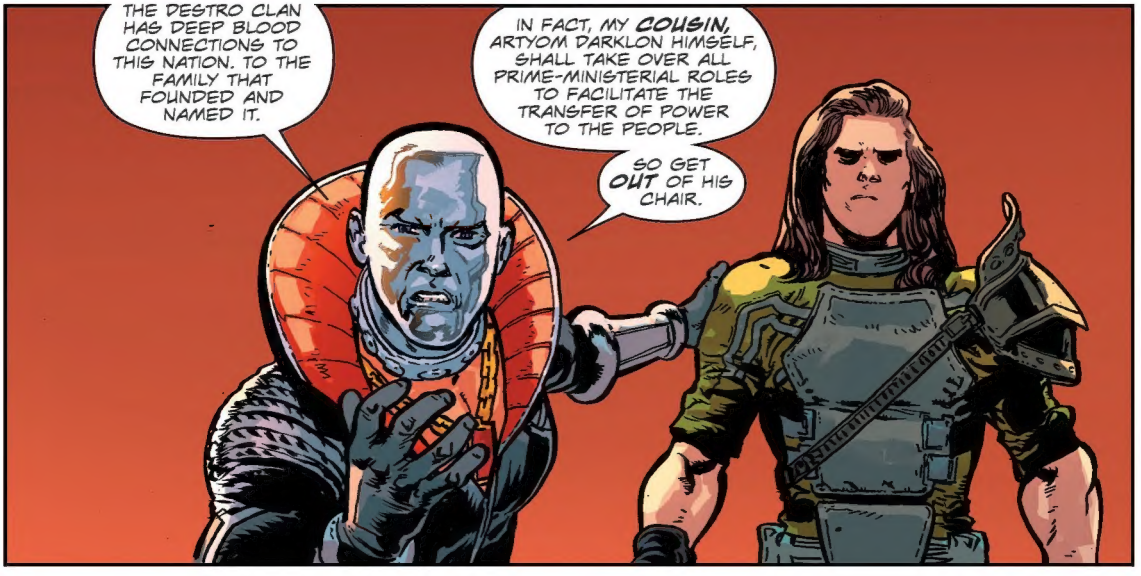

I DON'T UNDERSTAND.


WHEN DID HE BECOME A REVOLUTIONARY?
WHEN DID HE START TO CARE FOR THE PLIGHT OF SERFS AND FARMERS?
IT'S QUITE SIMPLE, EX-PRIME MINISTER...

THE MOMENT IT COULD TURN A PROFIT.

OH, PRIME MINISTER... WHAT'S THAT? WERE YOU CONTEMPLATING ACTING WITH HONOR FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YOUR LIFE?

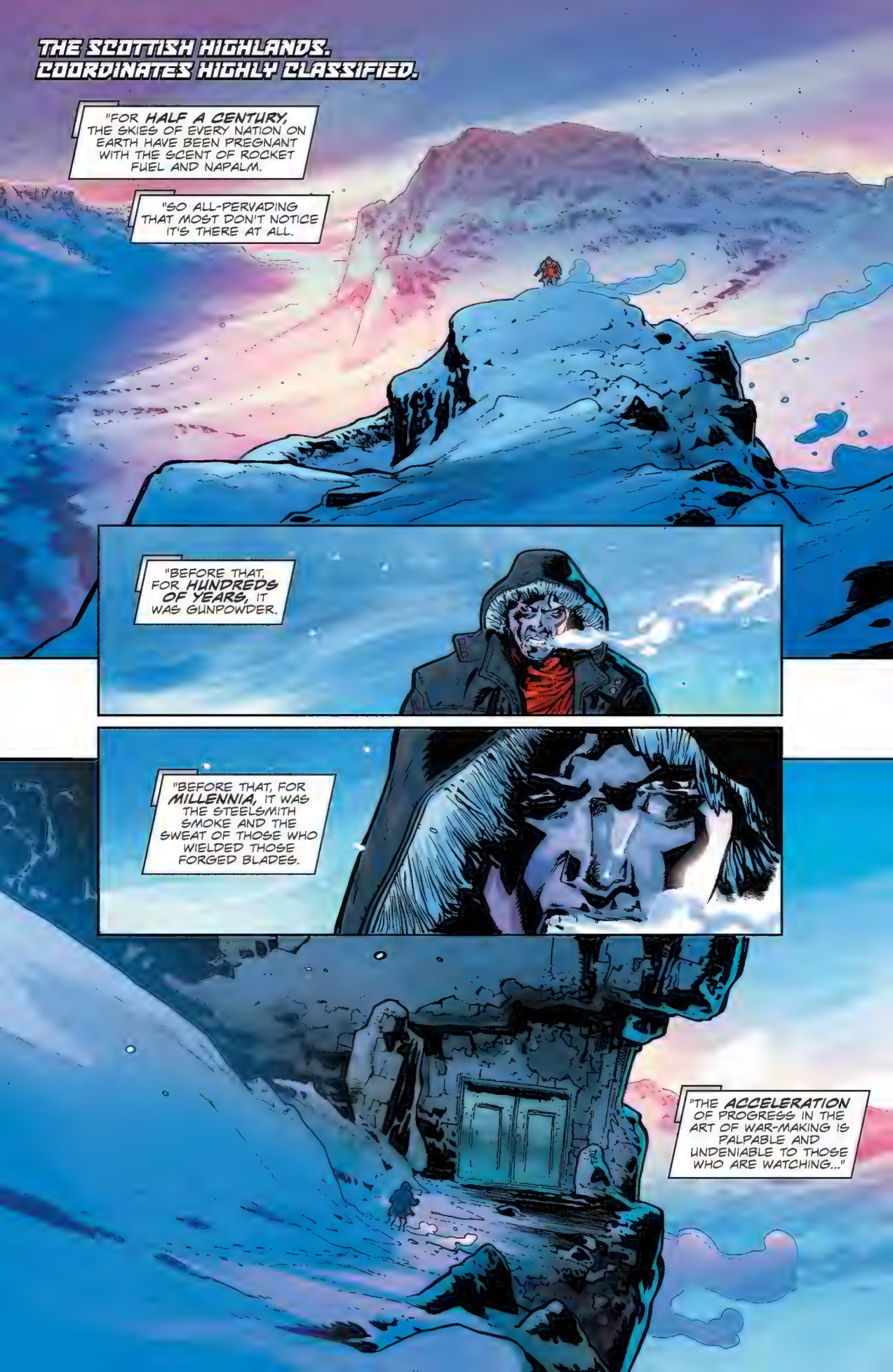
A GUN RUNNER TALKS TO ME OF HONOR.
WHAT'S THE PLAN? A COASTAL EUROPEAN PUPPET STATE WHERE YOU CAN TRAFFIC MUNITIONS WITH IMMUNITY?
HOW'S THAT MEANT TO WORK?


THE DESTRO CLAN HAS DEEP BLOOD CONNECTIONS TO THIS NATION. TO THE FAMILY THAT FOUNDED AND NAMED IT.
IN FACT, MY COUSIN, ARTYOM DARKLON HIMSELF, SHALL TAKE OVER ALL PRIME-MINISTERIAL ROLES TO FACILITATE THE TRANSFER OF POWER TO THE PEOPLE.
SO GET OUT OF HIS CHAIR.

ANOTHER BLOOD-SOAKED MERCENARY...
YOU KNOW THEY WILL WELCOME ME WITH OPEN ARMS.
THE PEOPLE LONG FOR THE DAYS THE COUNTRY WAS RULED WITH STRENGTH. WITH DIGNITY.
THE PEOPLE LOVE ME. THEY KNOW I HAVE THEIR BEST INTERESTS AT HEART.
PERHAPS. ONCE. BEFORE YOU BEGAN SIPHONING CRISIS FUNDS. UNTIL THE DROUGHTS MADE THEIR CROPS FAIL, AND THERE WAS NOTHING TO SAVE THEM WITH.
UNTIL YOU BEGAN BURNING DISSENTERS AT THE STAKE TO SILENCE THEM.
I'M TEMPTED TO DISCOVER WHAT THEY WILL DO WITH YOU IF WE LET YOU WALK OUT THE PALACE GATES.
I SUSPECT THEY'LL FIND NEW AND INNOVATIVE WAYS TO HURT YOU.
I HOPE I SEE YOU IN HELL, LAIRD DESTRO.

--PRIME MINISTER LOST HIS LIFE IN THE CONFLICT WITH LOCAL REVOLUTIONARIES. A CONTROVERSIAL FIGURE, HIS CABINET HAS IN RECENT YEARS BEEN ACCUSED OF ELECTION RIGGING AND FACILITATING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS--
DESTRO...
I AM DISSSPLEASED.
I PROVIDED YOU WITH THE ENERGON YOU REQUIRED TO MAKE YOUR B.A.T.S PROJECT A REALITY.
THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION OF USING THEM TO CONQUER BACKWATER NATIONS FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR PERSONAL VENDETTAS.
THE B.A.T.S NEEDED TESTING IN THE FIELD, COBRA COMMANDER.
THEIR I.F.F. PROGRAMMING REMAINS... VOLATILE AT BEST.
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
IT MEANS THEY SHOOT ANYTHING WITH A FACE IN THAT FACE. UNTIL THEY'RE SWITCHED OFF.

AND SO THEY ARE USELESS. THEY CANNOT BE DEPLOYED ALONGSIDE FIELD TROOPS.
FOR NOW.
WE ARE STILL AMASSING THE ARMY OF COBRA. WE MUST REMAIN IN THE SHADOWS.
WHAT YOU HAVE DONE HAS BROUGHT INTERNATIONAL EYES TO OUR OPERATION.
TO MY OPERATION.
I RUN M.A.R.S. NOT COBRA.
WE ARE IN BUSINESS TOGETHER.
I WILL BUILD YOUR MACHINES, WORK WITH YOU TOWARDS YOUR GOAL... BUT I AM NOT YOUR SUBORDINATE.
REMEMBER THAT.


THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS.
COORDINATES HIGHLY CLASSIFIED.
"FOR HALF A CENTURY, THE SKIES OF EVERY NATION ON EARTH HAVE BEEN PREGNANT WITH THE SCENT OF ROCKET FUEL AND NAPALM.
"SO ALL-PERVADING THAT MOST DON'T NOTICE IT'S THERE AT ALL.
"BEFORE THAT, FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS, IT WAS GUNPOWDER.
"BEFORE THAT, FOR MILLENNIA, IT WAS THE STEELSMITH SMOKE AND THE SWEAT OF THOSE WHO WIELDED THOSE FORGED BLADES.
"THE ACCELERATION OF PROGRESS IN THE ART OF WAR-MAKING IS PALPABLE AND UNDENIABLE TO THOSE WHO ARE WATCHING..."

CHANGE IS COMING TO THE WORLD OF WAR.
AND CLAN DESTRO WILL, AS EVER, STAND AT THE FOREFRONT.
THIS I PROMISE YOU, MY ANCESTORS.
CHANGE HAS COME TO THE WORLD OF WAR.
THIS NEW POWER SOURCE. ENERGON...
IT IS ALREADY ALLOWING ADVANCEMENTS UNIMAGINED EVEN A DECADE AGO.
YET OUR ANALYSES HAVE REVEALED NOTHING TO US YET OF ITS ORIGINS. OF ITS PRODUCTION.
THUS FAR, IT SIMPLY IS.

THE MAN WHO CALLS HIMSELF COBRA COMMANDER IS OUR ONLY SOURCE OF ENERGON.
HE BELIEVES THIS MEANS THAT HE CAN FOLD M.A.R.S. INTO HIS OWN ORGANIZATION.
NONE OF YOU--NO DESTRO WHO CAME BEFORE ME--BENT TO ANOTHER'S WILL.
I WILL NOT BE THE FIRST.
SO I SEEK YOUR WISDOM, MY ANCESTORS. AS THE WORLD SHIFTS UNDERFOOT, THREATENING TO SPLIT AT NEW SEAMS...
COUNSEL ME WITH THE INSIGHT THAT HAS SHAPED IT THROUGH HISTORY BY CRAFTING AND DISTRIBUTING THE ARMS OF WAR.
YES. YES, OF COURSE.

THREE WEEKS LATER.
DARKLONIA.
IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THE U.N. STILL HAS DARKLONIA LISTED AS A NATION IN CRISIS.
I DIDN'T EXPECT SUCH WONDERFUL SUMMER WEATHER HERE.
OH, DON'T WORRY. I'LL BE BACK IN MANHATTAN BY SUNDAY. BRUNCH AT JEAN-GEORGES, YEAH?
MISS CARLTON-RITZ?
I BELIEVE THE EVENT BEGINS IN AN HOUR.
ONE SEC.
BRANDON, WHICH ONE OF US IS THE CEO, AND WHICH ONE OF US IS THE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT BROUGHT ALONG BECAUSE LOOKING AT HIS FABULOUS BUTT CHEERS ME UP WHEN I GET BORED?
I... ONLY MEANT...
OH, DON'T FUSS. I'LL GO GET READY.
THESE THINGS ARE ALWAYS SO DULL.
IF YOU'VE SEEN ONE ILLEGAL ARMS FAIR, YOU'VE SEEN THEM ALL.

FRIENDS. I, **ARTYOM DARKLON,** WELCOME YOU TO THE FIRST BI-ANNUAL SECURITY INNOVATION DEFENSE EXPO.

WE THANK YOU FOR JOINING US.

WE APPRECIATE THAT WITH OUR NEW GOVERNMENT'S LEGITIMACY STILL AWAITING RECOGNITION BY VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL POWERS, THERE IS A CERTAIN NEED FOR... DISCRETION.

THEREFORE, BE ASSURED THIS EVENT DOES NOT OFFICIALLY EXIST AND IS NOT OFFICIALLY TAKING PLACE.

OF COURSE, THAT MEANS YOU MAY INDEED GET TO LAY EYES AND HANDS ON INNOVATIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS THAT DO NOT YET EXIST.

SO PLEASE. BROWSE, ENJOY, FEEL FREE TO SPEND THE BILLIONS OF YOUR NATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS ON MAKING THEM ALL THE SAFER.

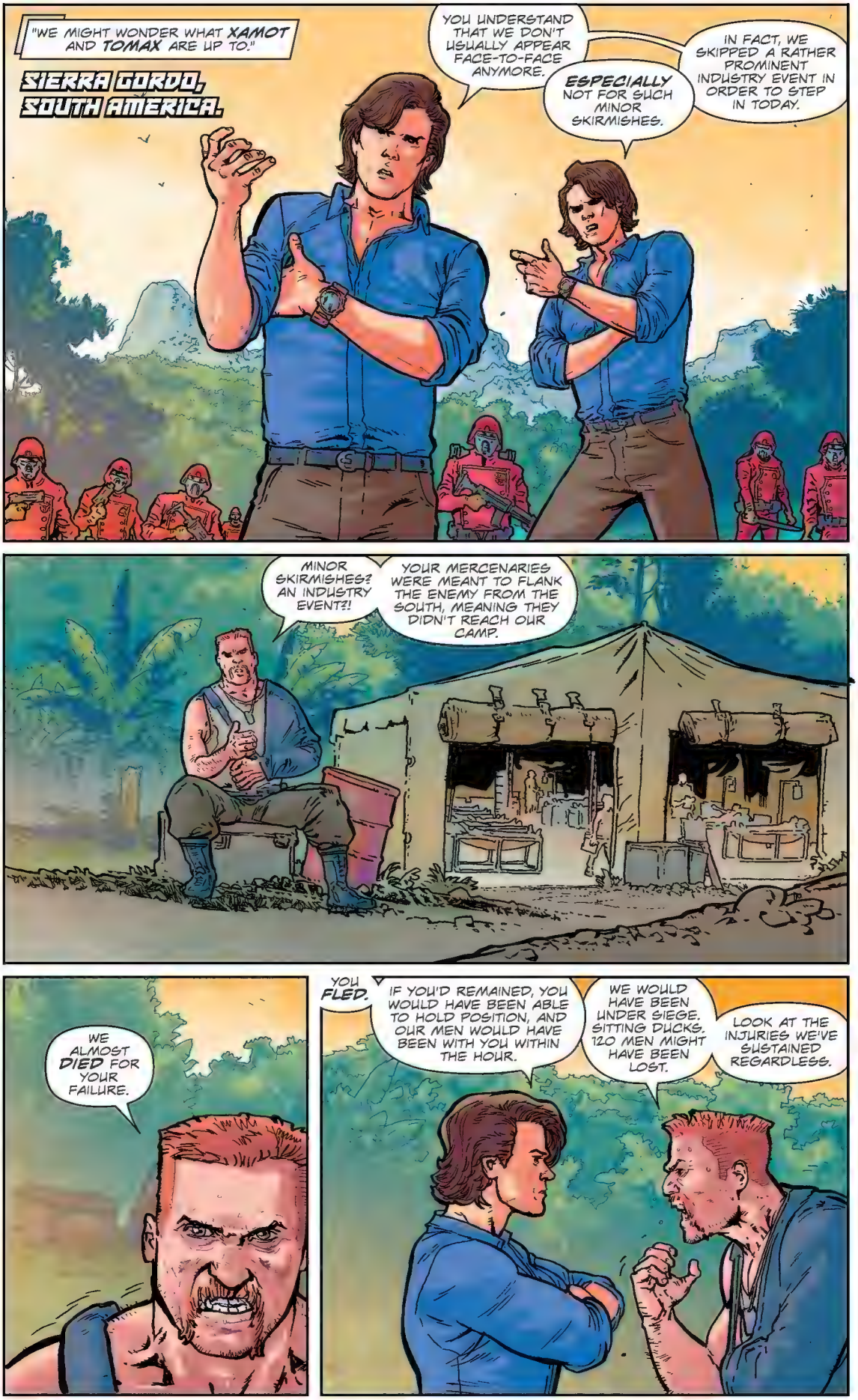
IT'S AN IMPRESSIVE TURNOUT.

M.A.R.S., BOSTON, HYBRID...

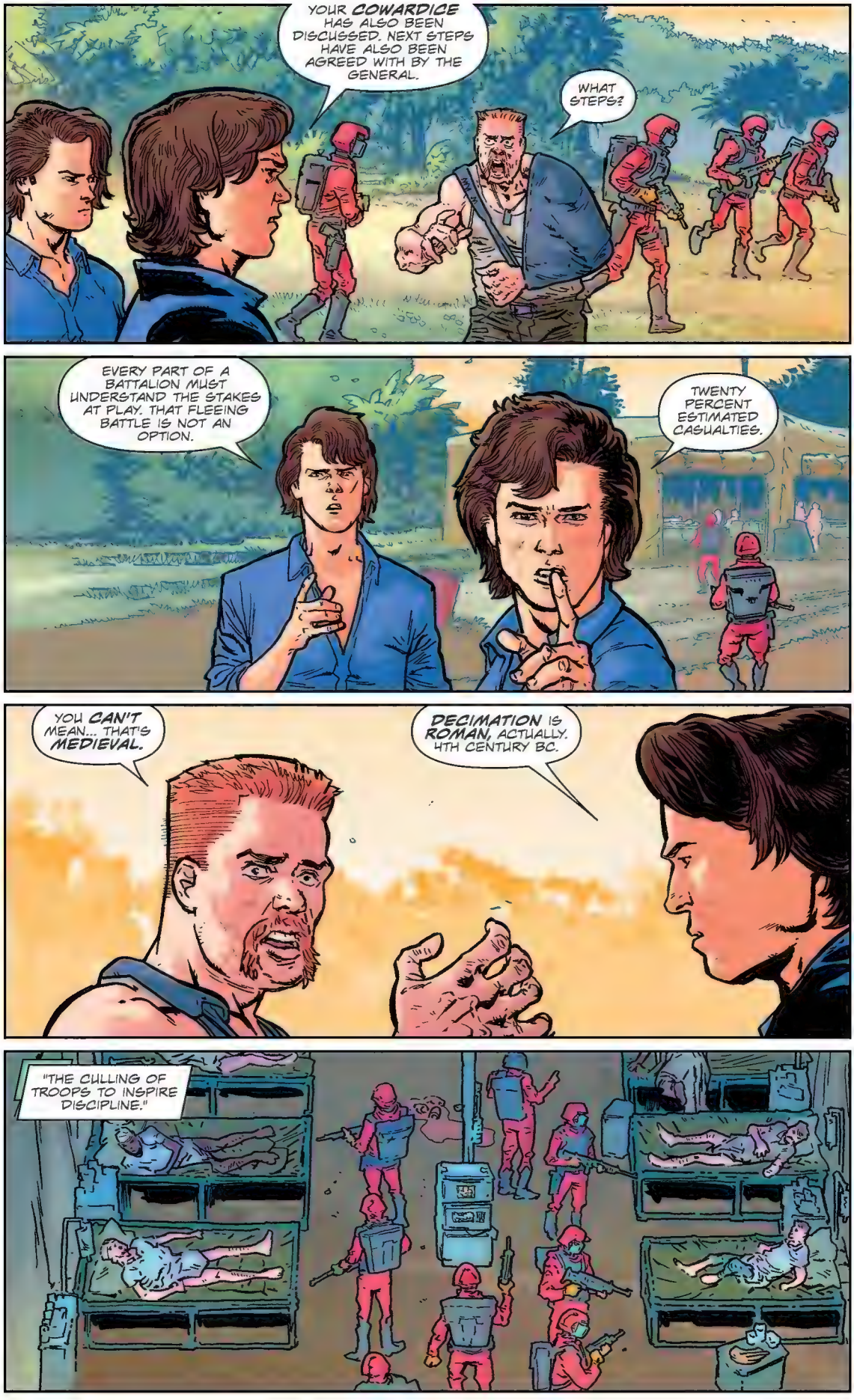
YOU SEE WHO'S **MISSING,** THOUGH?

EXTENSIVE ENTERPRISES MUST HAVE LOVED SNUBBING DESTRO BY REFUSING TO APPEAR.
OOH. SOUNDS LIKE DRAMA.
GENTLEMEN...
AND MS. CARLTON-RITZ, THE NEW CEO OF HYBRID TECHNOLOGIES.
WE HAVE YET TO MEET, I BELIEVE. I KNEW YOUR FATHER WELL.
ASTORIA, PLEASE. AND WE HAVEN'T. I'D REMEMBER A FACE LIKE YOURS.
YOU'RE DESTRO? FAROUK WAS JUST TALKING ABOUT YOU!
WAS HE INDEED?
UH, JUST ADMIRING THE WORK THAT'S GONE INTO THIS EVENT, LAIRD DESTRO. IT'S MOST GENEROUS OF M.A.R.S. TO HOST THIS SHOW.
I BELIEVE IN THE FREE MARKET, FAROUK. BUT ALSO IN COLLABORATION.
I HOPE BY BRINGING THE TITANS OF OUR INDUSTRY TOGETHER, NEW IDEAS WILL BLOSSOM IN THAT SPIRIT.
AND YET, IT SEEMS M.A.R.S. IS LIGHT-YEARS AHEAD OF THE COMPETITION.
IS THERE ANY TRUTH TO THE RUMOR YOU'VE DEVELOPED AUTOMATED MECHANICAL SOLDIERS?
YOU'VE BEEN LISTENING TO TOO MUCH GOSSIP I'M AFRAID...

"AS FAR AS I'M AWARE, NO SUCH THING EXISTS."
SIR, A WORD?
IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME.
WE'VE DONE A SWEEP OF ALL THE VENDORS.
WE SEE ACTIVE DEVELOPMENT IN IONIC WEAPONRY. CLAIMS OF ADVANCEMENT IN NANOTECH THAT MAY REMAIN HYPOTHETICAL.
BUT NO SIGN OF TECH UTILIZING ENERGON. IT'S POSSIBLE NO ONE ELSE HAS ACCESS TO IT.
HMM. YET EXTENSIVE ENTERPRISES ARE A NO-SHOW, MERCER...


"WE MIGHT WONDER WHAT XAMOT AND TOMAX ARE UP TO."
SIERRA GORDO, SOUTH AMERICA.
YOU UNDERSTAND THAT WE DON'T USUALLY APPEAR FACE-TO-FACE ANYMORE.
ESPECIALLY NOT FOR SUCH MINOR SKIRMISHES.
IN FACT, WE SKIPPED A RATHER PROMINENT INDUSTRY EVENT IN ORDER TO STEP IN TODAY.
MINOR SKIRMISHES? AN INDUSTRY EVENT?!
YOUR MERCENARIES WERE MEANT TO FLANK THE ENEMY FROM THE SOUTH, MEANING THEY DIDN'T REACH OUR CAMP.
WE ALMOST DIED FOR YOUR FAILURE.
YOU FLED.
IF YOU'D REMAINED, YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO HOLD POSITION, AND OUR MEN WOULD HAVE BEEN WITH YOU WITHIN THE HOUR.
WE WOULD HAVE BEEN UNDER SIEGE. SITTING DUCKS. 120 MEN MIGHT HAVE BEEN LOST.
LOOK AT THE INJURIES WE'VE SUSTAINED REGARDLESS.

WE ESTIMATE YOU WOULD HAVE SUSTAINED TWENTY PERCENT CASUALTIES. ABOUT AS MANY ARE CURRENTLY INJURED.
THE GUERRILLA CELL WOULD HAVE BEEN ANNIHILATED ENTIRELY, AND YOU WOULD HAVE RETAINED THE ROAD TO RIO VISTA.
TWENTY PERCENT OF MY SQUAD DEAD WOULD NOT BE AN ACCEPTABLE LOSS.
EXTENSIVE ENTERPRISES PROMISED TO PROVIDE THE MANPOWER SUPPORT WE NEEDED, WHEN WE NEEDED IT.
YOU PROMISED YOUR MERCENARIES HAD EVERY EVENTUALITY COVERED.
PROMISED?
WE DO NOT MAKE PROMISES. WE CONSULT. WE PROVIDE RISK ASSESSMENT.
WE PROVIDE THE MANPOWER AND EQUIPMENT NECESSARY TO PUT OUR ADVICE IN TO ACTION.
PLANS MUST BE AMORPHOUS. ADAPTABLE.
OUR CRIMSON GUARD UNIT WAS BRIEFLY DIVERTED TO INTERCEPT ENEMY SUPPLIES. THIS WAS DISCUSSED WITH THE GENERAL.
W-WAIT.
WITH THE GENERAL?


YOUR COWARDICE HAS ALSO BEEN DISCUSSED. NEXT STEPS HAVE ALSO BEEN AGREED WITH BY THE GENERAL.
WHAT STEPS?
EVERY PART OF A BATTALION MUST UNDERSTAND THE STAKES AT PLAY. THAT FLEEING BATTLE IS NOT AN OPTION.
TWENTY PERCENT ESTIMATED CASUALTIES.
YOU CAN'T MEAN... THAT'S MEDIEVAL.
DECIMATION IS ROMAN, ACTUALLY. 4TH CENTURY BC.
"THE CULLING OF TROOPS TO INSPIRE DISCIPLINE."

BANGBANGBANGBANGBANGBANGBANGBAN

IT DIDN'T HAVE TO GO THIS WAY, FIELD COMMANDER.
THE REPUTATION OF EXTENSIVE ENTERPRISES IS IMPORTANT TO US, AND YOU WERE DRAGGING IT THROUGH THE MUD.
YOU BA--
-:HKKK!:-
GOOD EVENING, GENERAL.
IT'S DONE. WOULD YOU LIKE US TO DRAW UP AN ESTIMATE TO REPLACE THE SOLDIERS WITH CRIMSON GUARDSMEN?
HKKKKK!
VERY GOOD. WE'LL HAVE IT TO YOU FOR MONDAY MORNING. YOU'LL NEED A NEW FIELD COMMANDER, AS WELL.
OH, THERE'S NO NEED TO APOLOGIZE. YES, WE DID INDEED MISS THE ARMS FAIR IN DARKLONIA...

"...BUT EVERY SETBACK IS AN OPPORTUNITY."
WHAT ON EARTH...?
INSIDE. EVERYONE.
UNIDENTIFIED COMBAT DRONE
CARBON NANOFIBER CARAPACE
CRUISE SPEED 295 KM/H
CLOAKING SYSTEM?
MAX COMBAT LOAD: 450 KG

WE'RE UNDER ATTACK!
BOOM
BOOM
THEY SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GET ANYWHERE NEAR OUR AIRSPACE WITHOUT US KNOWING ABOUT IT...

"...I WANT AN INTACT SAMPLE."
BANG BANG BANG BANG
KABOOM

YOU IDIOT. THAT'S A 25-MILLION-DOLLAR TANK.
SIR, MORE INCOMING!
MS. CARLTON-RITZ!
ASTORIA!
IT'S...
IT'S BEAUTIFUL.
MUST I BE SURROUNDED BY FOOLS?

GET DOWN!
CHNNK

A DUD.
IT WOULD APPEAR THAT I AM AT WAR.
TO BE CONTINUED...

DIRECT ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO
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GIJOE@SKYBOUND.COM

It's not the first time an editor has come to me and said, "We wanted a book about a maniacal, sociopathic despot, so we thought of you." Which perhaps I should see as a little concerning on a personal level, but I hope it doesn't stop happening. For my money, the devil has the best music, and his party has the best characters. And a perfect example of that is our beloved Destro.

Hailing from the distant, vaguely haunted shores of the United Kingdom, I didn't grow up with G.I. Joe the way most of my American peers did. We had Action Man instead, who was basically a Ken doll with a bowie knife and a pair of rollerblades (and yes, thank you, he did rule). So I've come to this with a fresh pair of eyes, and have been delighted to find such deep, complex, and periodically unhinged source material to draw from.

Destro fits a pretty classic Gothic archetype. He's a capital-R Romantic, blazing his own trail, following his own code of ethics regardless of how the world around him perceives him. He's a small r-romantic, desiring human connection yet isolated by his paranoia and the weight he feels from the legacy of his ancestors. In our story, his closest confidantes are in their cold graves. The idea of a character like this—globally powerful, fiercely independent, even idealistic in his own horrible way—having to accept a place as second-in-command to another is a fascinating one. And traditionally that's exactly where he finds himself in relation to Cobra Commander.

So here we are, near the beginning of the Energon Universe, to discover exactly how that happens. And how Destro makes peace with it—as far as he ever can. How he perceives the bullet train of the future hurtling towards humanity, and how he decides to ally himself to face it. This is an origin story, to a point, but it's not the story of how a good man turned bad. It's the story of how far a bad man will go to guarantee himself a place in the coming world.

And he does it all dressed like a pro-wrestling vampire. Oh, how I love this guy.

Dan Watters
May 2024
London, UK

CODENAME G.I. JOE CONTINUES
SCARLETT
Red-hot writer KELLY THOMPSON (DC's Birds of Prey) and artist MARCO FERRARI (Frontiersman) introduce some of the most anticipated characters to the Energon Universe.
ISSUE #1 AVAILABLE NOW!
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WELCOME TO THE ENERGON UNIVERSE

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MONACO.

ZIIIP

CH-CHLICK

SCARLETT IN POSITION.
TIK
COPY THAT, AGENT.
SECURITY IS... EXTREMELY HEAVY. ARE WE CERTAIN THE HOSTAGES ARE NOT ON SITE? COULD THIS BE THE ACTUAL BUY?

INTEL SAYS NO. BUT EVEN IF THE ASSETS WERE ON SITE, AGENT, THAT'S NOT YOUR PURVIEW.
YOU'RE THERE TO GATHER EVIDENCE AND CONFIRM BUYERS, IF POSSIBLE. INVESTIGATION, NOT ENGAGEMENT.
TIK
...UNDERSTOOD, CONTROL.
BUYER "BARTLEBY", IDENT CONFIRMED.
COPY THAT.
?
TIK
CONTROL, I RECOGNIZE THIS SYMBOL, BUT CAN'T PLACE IT...
RECEIVED.

COLLECT ALL THESE EXCITING ENERGON UNIVERSE COVERS

COVER A

ANDREI BRESSAN & ADRIANO LUCAS

COVER B

ANDREA MILANA

COVER C

NIKOLA ĆIŽMEŠIJA

COVER D

STEVE EPTING

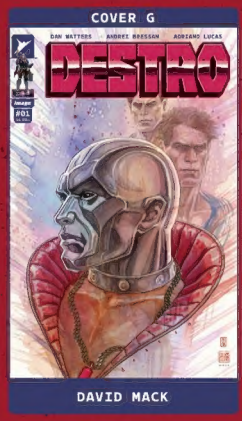
COVER E

JORGE FORNÉS

COVER F

JONBOY MEYERS

COVER G



DAVID MACK

COVER H

COVER I

JASON HOWARD & ANNALISA LEONI

COVER J

JASON HOWARD

AVAILABLE NOW WHEREVER COMICS ARE SOLD

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